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LETTER DATED 6 DECEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MAURITANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit formally to the Security Council the candidature of Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations for the period from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2001.

This candidature comes in the context of the common approach initiated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its thirty-second regular summit meeting, held a Yaoundé, which culminated, after consultations at the highest level, in the position reflected in the letter dated 29 November 1996 addressed to the President of the Security Council by Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon and current Chairman of OAU, in which it is stated that African States "may contact the Security Council directly" if they wish to put forward candidates and "inform the current Chairman of OAU of their action".

As can be seen from the attached curriculum vitae, Ambassador Ould-Abdallah, who served in the Mauritanian Administration as a senior official, ambassador and minister, is not unknown at the United Nations where for a long time he served in a number of important positions, notably that of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Burundi.

The Mauritanian Government, which attaches the utmost importance to the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, believes that the competence, experience and personal qualities of Ambassador Ould-Abdallah fully qualify him to serve as Secretary-General at this decisive stage in the Organization's history.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmed Ould SID'AHMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: English]

Biographical note

Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah

On 15 June 1996, Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah took up an appointment as the Executive Secretary of the Global Coalition for Africa, a Washington D.C.-based intergovernmental forum for African political and economic issues. Its co-chairs include, inter alia, Sir Ketumile Quett Masire, President of Botswana, Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk of the Netherlands and Robert McNamara, former President of the World Bank.

A citizen of Mauritania, Mr. Ould-Abdallah will be continuing a distinguished career in public service, during which he has occupied senior posts in both his own country and in the United Nations. He served as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Burundi from November 1993 to October 1995. Prior to his service in Burundi, he was at United Nations Headquarters in New York as the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, a position to which he returned following completion of his assignment as Special Representative. In this capacity, he represented the United Nations, which was co-organizer, along with the Government of Japan and the Global Coalition for Africa, of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in October 1993. He joined the United Nations in 1984 and was in charge of energy policy issues.

He has held several important posts in his native Mauritania, including Director-General of National Industries (1968-1971), Minister of Commerce and Transportation (1971-1972), Ambassador to the United States of America (1973-1976), the European Union, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (1976-1979), and Minister for Foreign Affairs (1979-1980). He was also a member of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer of Société nationale industrielle et minière, Mauritania's largest corporation involved in iron ore mining, in 1980. During his period of public service, he advocated an open approach to economic and political issues on the domestic and international arenas.

Mr. Ould-Abdallah is also a co-founder and board member of Transparency International, an international non-governmental organization devoted to fighting corruption, and the author of numerous articles on preventive diplomacy and development issues. He recently published a book entitled "Diplomatie Pyromane" which largely focuses on post-cold war conflicts.

Born in 1940 in Hassi-Abdallah, Mauritania, Mr. Ould-Abdallah received his higher education at the Universities of Grenoble and Paris (Sorbonne), and graduated with a Master's degree in economics and a diploma of higher economic studies, respectively. He also holds a diploma from the Paris Institut des études politiques. He has been honoured by, inter alia, the Governments of Mauritania, Senegal and Belgium. Divorced, he is the father of one son.